



The 11th FIDE World Cup in Composing

Section F – Selfmates

Preliminary award by

Zoran Gavrilovski

MMXXIII

I appreciate much the invitation to judge again the FIDE World Cup (this time in the selfmate section) and I thank the organizers for entrusting me to judge this tourney. I also thank the authors for sending 32 selfmates, which I received from Aleksey Oganessian without the authors' names.

In making the award I was guided by the originality of ideas and realisation thereof, with emphasis on richness of the play (thus problems with multiple presentation of the thematic ideas are ranked high), well-pointed elements of the play (such as unexpected moves and maneuvers) and the construction's quality (light settings are better than heavier settings if the latter do not introduce thematic or interesting play).

The tourney's overall quality was of a good level, but perhaps still lower than the earlier editions of this prominent international tourney. It was easy for me to disregard nearly half of the entries without complex and/or unified thematic content and some others that just did not show something special or selfmate-specific.

The remaining 15 problems could successfully compete in other tourneys, but I shortened the list of those that enter the award. The entries which are otherwise good include those that repeat familiar mechanisms, such as **F31 (s#3, ♘a3-♘c5, 11+10)**, which shows a rather familiar reciprocal change (used even in a S#4 in the 11th

WCCT), based on the choice of capture or non-capture of a white piece, which in **F31** makes the 1st moves in two phases (an example of earlier usage of this mechanism is Waldemar Tura's 1st Pr. *Wola Gulowska* 1992 ([P1179952](#))).

The list of candidates for inclusion into the award was further shortened in the light of the existence of constructional flaws that are not justified in a specific context.

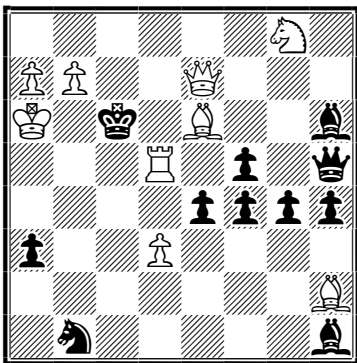
For example, **F27 (s#3, ♘a3-♘d6, 10+11)** is not quite successful rendering of AUW theme because of its flight-taking key and the repeated W3 and B3 moves in two variations, which make it inferior to more economical renderings (F27 has 10+11 pieces) with richer content (F27 has no other thematic features).

I awarded 1st Commendation to **F30 (s#5, ♘a6-♘c6, 11+8)** in my draft award (in spite of its similarity with Andrey Selivanov's S#5, 2nd Pr. *Wola Gulowska* 2008, available at [yacpdb/378124](#)) and the repetition of 2 white moves, but in the morning of 4 August I was informed that the author has withdrawn his problem from the tourney.

Of course, a judge's assessment of tourney entries may depend on his/her preferences of some composing schools and styles, but I hope that I paid due attention to all the entries: "algebraic", Bohemian, logical and strategic. The level of the prize-winning entries ranges from very good to excellent. My earlier experiences of judging some major tourneys, such as this one, reveal

that a number of prize-winners enter the FIDE Album and I hope that the tradition will continue. On the other hand, I will be happy if some other honoured entries find their way to the anthologies and also I wish the authors of the non-honoured entries to score well in other tourneys (better than they might have been ranked in an event of my decision to include them in the present award). In any event, I hope that the readers will enjoy the problems as much as I did when I was studying them in the course of making the award.

F13 – 1st Prize



s#6

9+11

1.b8♖? (A) (2.♖ee8+ ♖:e8 3.♖b5+ ♘c7 4.a8♗+ ♖:a8#),

1...♖g5 2.♖eb4! (3.♗e7+ ♖:e7 4.♖c5+ ♖:c5 5.♖b6+ ♖:b6#) 2...♗f8! 3.♖c4+! ♗c5 4.♗e7+! ♖:e7 5.♖:c5+! ♖:c5 6.♖b6+ ♖:b6# (2.♖ed8? ♗f8!) – delayed arrival by a white piece on the square e7 at

the W4 move that has been vacated by the white Queen at the W2 move.

1...♗c3! 2.♖~e8+ ♖:e8 3.♖~c7+ ♘:c7 4.♗:f4+ ♗:f4!

1.♗f6! – 2.♖c7+! ♘:c7 3.b8♖+! (A) ♘c6 4.♖b5+ ♘c7 5.♗e8+ ♖:e8 6.a8♗+ ♖:a8#. A full-length threat (a notable feature in the light of the logic character of a part of the content, typical of Camilo Gamnitzer's style) with double Phoenix and double switchback by the bK.

1...♖f7 2.b8♖! (A) (3.♖ec7+! ♖:c7 4.♖b6+ ♖:b6#) 2...♖:f6 3.♗d6+! ♘c5 4.d4+ ♖:d4 5.♗c6+! ♘:c6 6.♖b6+ ♖:b6#. Dresden theme, that is achieved with substitution of the strong black defence 1...♗c3! (which refutes the try 1.b8♖?) by a new defence 1...♖f7 and then by replying to the main plan 2.b8♖ (which works owing to the changed threat after 2.b8♖ that no longer allows Black to defend by guarding the square b5 as in the try, because in the solution 1...♗c3 is met by 2.♗d7+ ♘c7 3.♗e8+ ♖:e8 4.b8♖+ ♖:b8 5.a8♗+ ♖:a8#) with a move by the black piece which made the substitute defence (2...♖:f6). In addition, a white battery is created at the W3 move and there is delayed arrival of the front battery piece (w♗) on the square c6 at the W5 move that has been vacated by the black King (delayed Umnov effect) at the B3 move.

1...♖e8 2.b8♗+! (B) ♖:b8 3.♗d7+! ♘c7 4.♗b5+! ♘c8 5.♖e6+ ♘c7 6.a8♗+! ♖:a8#. A specific type of

Umnov 2 defence at the B1 move (in relation to the threat's W5 move), another promotion on b8 at the W2 move and battery creation and firing at W3-W4 moves, followed by delayed arrival of the w♖ on the square e6 at the W5 move that has been vacated by the front battery piece (w♗) at the W3 move (2.b8♖? does not work because Black defends by 2...♗c8+!, while 2.♖b4? is met by 2...♗d7!).

1...♗g5 2.♖e8+ ♘c7 3.♗:f4+ (3...♗:f4?? is impossible owing to the interference with the b♗h6's line at the B1 move) 3...♖:f4 4.♗d8+ ♘c6 5.b8♗+! (B) ♖:b8 6.♖(d)b6+ ♖:b6#.

1...f3 2.♗d6+ ♘c5 3.♗:e4+ (3...♗:e4?? is impossible owing to the interference with the b♗h1's line at the B1 move) 3...♘b4 (3...f:e4? 4.♖c7+ ♘b4 5.♖a5+ ♖:a5#) 4.b8♖+! (A) ♘a4 5.♖ee8+ ♖:e8 6.♖b5+ ♖:b5# (2.b8♖? does not work because of 2...♗g5!).

The author claimed that this selfmate is composed in the "Theme of the Future" (TF) style, with 5 lines of play: the threat + a pair of variations after b♖'s defences (with white promotions at the W2 move, battery creation at the W3 move and delayed arrival on squares vacated by Black or White) + a 2nd pair of variations after defences which interfere with a black line (in which *different* pieces standing on the b-file, on one hand, and the w♖e7, on the other hand, exchange roles by sacrificing to the b♖ at the W5 move and forcing the

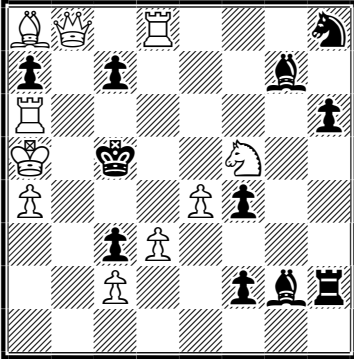
selfmate at the W6 move). The claimed "opening of a line b8-h2 for black or white" in the 2nd pair of variations employs the w♗h2, but could hardly be called a theme or a unified thematic feature.

The two pairs are related to each other by means of reappearance of the promotions on b8 as W2 moves in the 1st pair of variations, and as W4 or W5 move in the 2nd pair of variations. Moreover, the moves a8♗+, ♗d6+, ♖e8+ and ♖b5+ also change their functions, but these reappearances at various stages of different variations seem rather incidental.

The position is pleasantly light and the white pieces are reasonably well-used. The key is made by a distant white Knight, but this distance does not bother me too much because the w♗ is necessary for the try, in which the play after 1...♗g5 is nicely changed.

In sum, although the first pair of variations is clearly better than the second pair, the combined content of the actual and virtual play makes F13 a worthy winner. This problem scores high owing to its rich, reasonably unified and truly original play, which involves a logical try. I ranked it higher than the single-liner F2, because F13 has a vivid black play and it has a bit more original (though not so elegant) white play in comparison with F2.

F2 – 2nd Prize



s#15

10+11

1. ♖b3! vacates the square b8 and threatens 2. ♕:c3+ ♜:c3#. After 1... ♜f8 the white Queen arrives to the 1st rank 2. ♖b1 (3.d4+ ♚c4 4. ♖b4+ ♜:b4#) 2... ♜g7 and then goes to the southwest corner of the chessboard by means of 3. ♖a1! (4. ♖:c3+ ♜:c3#).

After 3... ♜f8 the white Rook arrives on a square vacated by the white Queen – 4. ♜b8!, replacing her role on b4 in the threat (5.d4+ ♚c4 6. ♜b4+ ♜:b4#), but it still cannot visit a8 (to hide there) in the subsequent play. Therefore, after 4... ♜g7 the white Bishop must leave its diagram square a8 by interfering with the white Rook – 5. ♜b7! (6. ♖:c3+ ♜:c3#) 5... ♜f8, and then the w♜ opens the w♞'s line – 6. ♜c6 (threatening 7.d4+ ♚c4 8. ♜b4+ ♜:b4#), thus 6... ♜g7 defends again. Now a8 is vacated and the w♞ can visit it – 7. ♞a8!!

(another move to the chessboard's corner, threatening 8. ♖:c3+ ♜:c3#), so Black defends by 7... ♜f8.

Once this manoeuvre is completed, the white Queen can return to b8 through the same route in a reversed order – 8. ♖b1 (9.d4+ ♚c4 10. ♖b4+ ♜:b4#) 8... ♜g7 9. ♖b3 (10. ♖:c3+ ♜:c3#) 9... ♜f8 10. ♖b8 (11.d4+ ♚c4 12. ♖b4+ ♜:b4#) and now the w♞ is on the other side of the w♖ in comparison with the diagram position.

After 10... ♜g7 11. ♖f8+! ♜:f8 12. ♜b8 (yet another arrival to a square which was earlier vacated by the white Rook (a switchback) and by the white Queen, threatening 13.d4+ ♚c4 14. ♜b4+ ♜:b4#). Now, when the white Queen has gone from the chessboard, the white Rook can finish the manoeuvre after the only defence against the threat – 12... ♜g7 13. ♜b3 (14. ♜:c3+ ♜:c3#) ♜f8 14.d4+ ♚c4 15. ♜b4+ ♜:b4#.

White must open the 8th rank for his Queen in order to allow her to access f8, given that her sacrificial move 1. ♖f8+?? is impossible in the outset (in an event of being possible, it would have been followed by 1... ♜:f8 2. ♜b8 etc.). However, the sacrificial decoy of the black Bishop to f8 may yield the desired outcome only if there is a piece that will do the same thing what the w♖ does after the unprovoked arrival of the bB to f8 in the set play (*1... ♜f8

2.d4+ ♔c4 3.♖b4+ ♜:b4#) and this piece is the white ♜d8. This can be achieved if the white Rook moves to clear the eighth rank and yet remains close to the square b8 from which a selfmate on b4 could be forced (♜b8-♜b3-♜b4+).

The above task is by no means easy because Black, apart from his modest defence options (oscillating defences by the black Bishop on f8 or g7), is not a “sitting duck”, so a precise white play is required throughout the solution in order to move the white Rook from the b8-f8 line. The w♖’s departure from b8 allows her to threaten by checks on c3 or b4 on her way to the 1st rank, and from the solution it will be seen that the white Rook at one point of time will have to visit a8 in order to allow the w♖ to visit b8 again. However, such a move is initially impossible (♜a8??) because a8 is occupied by a w♔, so this square must be vacated, too.

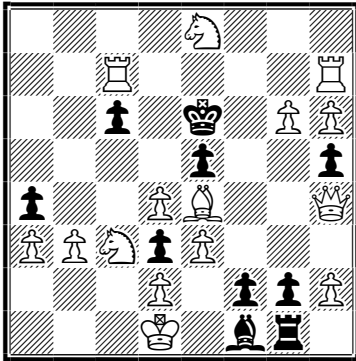
The author commented that F2’s content includes some “complex nested manoeuvres employing the bB with several switchbacks and the turntable b8 to get the wR into the corner behind the wQ”, but this manoeuvre is not “Bristol” (as wrongly claimed by him), but only a delayed Bristol because of the gap between the moves by the wQ and

the wR (W1-W2 moves – W13 move, if one can disregard the fact that the wQ already returned backwards prior to the wR’s movement along the b-file); and the switchback by the white Queen on b8 after the white Rook has passed through this square shows a delayed form of the Klasinc theme.

I agree with the author’s comment that his problem shows a “capture-free” play which is “subtle”, and, although the overall concept of play is familiar (bringing *déjà vu* feelings when one sees the quiet white manoeuvre and the familiar black oscillatory play), I hope that it is sufficiently “original” to justify its high place in the award.

This assessment is supported by my profound belief that the construction and economy are good, and that the power of the logic of F2 outweighs the apparent richness of multiple and/or multiphase play of the remaining few entries.

F21 – 3rd Prize



s#6

15+10

1. ♖a7? – 2.d5+ c:d5 3. ♗g7+ ♕d6
 4. ♜f6+ ♖c5 5. ♗:a4+ ♖b5 6. ♗:d3+
 ♗:d3#, 1...c5 2. ♗g7+ ♖d6 3.d:c5+
 ♖:c5 4. ♗d8! (5. ♗:a4+ ♖b5 6. ♗:d3+
 ♗:d3#), 1...a:b3! (x)

1. ♗:a4? ♖h1! (y)

1.d:e5! zz

1...a:b3 (x) 2. ♗h3+ ♖:e5 3. ♗:h5+
 ♖e6 4. ♗f5+ ♖e5 5. ♗:d3+ (A) ♖e6
 6. ♗c4+ (B) ♗:c4#

1... ♖h1 (y) 2. ♖:c6+ ♖:e5 3. ♖c5+
 ♖e6 4. ♗d5+ ♖f5 5. ♗c4+ (B) ♖:g6
 6. ♗:d3+ (A) ♗:d3#, 4... ♖e5 5. ♗:g2+
 (C) ♖e6 6. ♗h3+ (D) ♗:h3#

1... ♖:e5 2. ♗:h5+ ♖e6 3. ♗:a4! ♖h1
 4. ♗f5+ ♖d5(e5) 5. ♗h3+ (D) ♖e4
 6. ♗:g2+ (C) ♗:g2#, 3...c5 4. ♗g4+
 ♖e5 5. ♗:c5 ♖h1 6. ♗:d3 ♗:d3#.

Another strategic problem with a good play, enriched by two tries that are refuted by black moves (x, y) which reappear as first black moves in the solution.

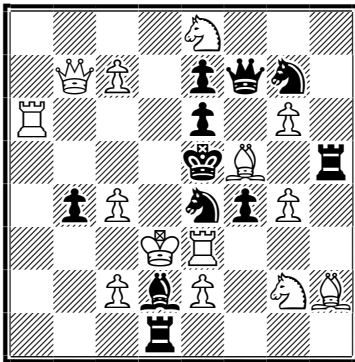
The problem shows creation of white lateral batteries by w♗'s moves on f5 and d5, and play by white and black batteries in synthesis with quadruple black battery play and four distinct mates. In this context the repetition of one mate (6...♗:d3#) is not a big flaw, but the repetition of the thematic move 3. ♗f5+ is certainly unpleasant because the claimed quadruple white thematic play is somewhat repetitive. The distribution of the content into a few sub-variations hardly enables to characterize the problem as a TF-selfmate, i.e. Adabashev synthesis (or Adabashev theme as claimed by the author).

Nevertheless, the main thematic variations (after 1...a:b3 and 1... ♖h1) are well-matched in all subsequent half-moves, and the content is further enriched by means of nicely exchanged white moves between the 1st variation and the 1st sub-variation of the 2nd variation (AB-BA), and between the 2nd sub-variation of the 2nd variation and the 1st sub-variation of the 3rd variation (CD-DC), irrespective of the arrival of the w♖ on d3/c4 or g2/h3 from different departure squares. Thus, even the 3rd variation should be seen as a bonus, rather than as an alien body (in spite of the repeated W4 and B6 moves).

The key is good because of granting a flight to the black King, in spite of the fact that it is made by means of capturing a black pawn. On the other hand, it should be noted that the problem's position is unpleasingly heavy, but it still seems that such a flaw is a constructional price that had to be paid for showing the content of this interesting selfmate.

F17 shows a complete cycle of white 2nd, 3rd and 4th moves, enabled by means of a varied strategy: decoy of b♖h5 to the mating square in the 1st variation, chasing the b♔ to g5 in order to open a b♙/b♖ battery's line in the 2nd variation and annihilation of w♙f5 + decoy of b♗f7 to the mating square in the 3rd variation. This cyclic theme was increasingly explored in recent years (mostly by Mikhail Khramtsevich), so F17 resembles a well-known story that is told in a bit different and hopefully still original manner.

F17 – 4th Prize



s#4

14+11

1. ♖a7! – 2. ♗:e6+ ♔:e6 3. ♗c5+ ♗d5 4. ♗d4+ ♔:d4#

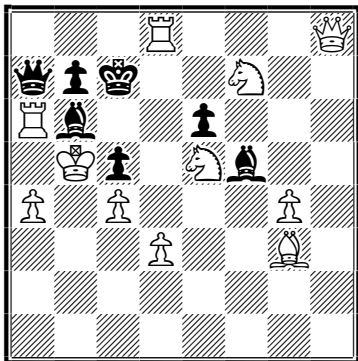
1... ♗:f5 2. ♙:f4+ (A) ♗:f4 3. ♗:e4+ (B) ♗:e4 4. ♗d4+ (C) ♗:d4#

1... ♗:e8, ♔:e8 2. ♗:e4+ (B) ♔:f6 3. ♗d4+ (C) ♔:g5 4. ♙:f4+ (A) ♙:f4#

1... ♗:f5 2. ♗d4+ (C) ♗:d4 3. ♙:f4+ (A) ♗:f4 4. ♗:e4+ (B) ♗:e4#

I dislike the heavy setting and the presence of the thematic move ♗d4+ in the non-thematic threat, thus I could not rank F17 higher.

F23 – Special Prize



s#3

11+7

The set play *1...♙a5 (x)
 2. ♖f3+ (A) / ♗d7+ (B) / ♘g6+ (C)
 e5 3. ♚c6+ b:c6# shows a triple at
 the W2 move, repeated in the first
 try in a form of a triple threat, that
 is refuted by the black move which
 allows this triple in the set play
 (Dombrovskis theme between the
 set play and the first try 1. ♗f6?).

1. ♗f6? – 2. ♖f3+ (A) / ♗d7+ (B) /
 ♘g6+ (C) e5 3. ♚c6+ b:c6#, 1...♙a5! (x)

1. ♗h6? – 2. ♖f3+ (A) / ♗d7+ (B) e5
 3. ♚c6+ b:c6#, 1...♙a5 (x) 2. ♘g6+ (C)
 e5 3. ♚c6+ b:c6#, 1...♙g6!

1. ♗h1? – 2. ♗d7+ (B) / ♘g6+ (C)
 e5 3. ♚c6+ b:c6#, 1...♙a5 (x) 2. ♖f3+
 (A) e5 3. ♚c6+ b:c6#, 1...♙e4!

1. ♗e8! – 2. ♘g6+ (C) / ♖f3+ (A) e5
 3. ♚c6+ b:c6#, 1...♙a5 (x) 2. ♗d7+
 (B) e5 3. ♚c6+ b:c6#.

The last two tries and the
 solution show a cycle of double

threats and continuation according
 to the pattern (AB)C/(BC)C/(CA)B,
 a strong theme which – according to
 the author – was “made for the first
 time in a selfmate”. This pattern is
 essentially close to the cyclic Le
 Grand theme [whose pattern is
 (A)B/(B)C/(C)A], but with a double
 threat in each phase that resembles
 a double-threat type of the
 Dombrovskis paradox in relation to
 the set play.

The cooking of this truly exclusive
 “alphabet soup” was possible by the
 following means:

- threats in each phase are
 ensured by targeting the squares at
 the W1 moves from which the white
 Queen can reach the square c6 at
 the W3 move after w♙e5 has
 abandoned its control of c6 at the
 W2 move (1. ♗f6? allows all three
 thematic moves as threats because
 from f6 all three W2 moves allow
 her to reach c6, while the other two
 tries and the solution each prevent
 one of the three threats due to
 interfering with the white Queen’s
 route to c6);

- the W2 move after 1...♙a5 (as
 well as the mechanism of cyclic
 change, too) is nicely determined by
 the necessity of closing the white
 Queen’s route to c6 (the same one
 which was not possible in the
 respective try’s / solution’s threat
 due to closure of the respective
 w♗’s line) at the W2 move, because
 the said black defence has opened

the white Rook's line a6-c6 (still no inversion of motive exists, because 1... ♖a5 also loses control of a5), so the closure of the w♖'s route to c6 allows the white Rook to check on c6 at the W3 move and to force a selfmate there.

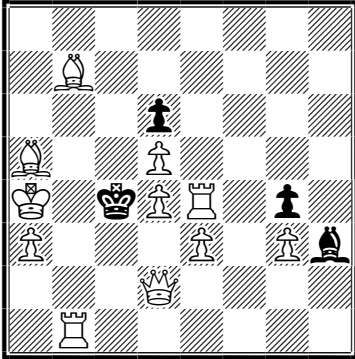
In the threats of the last three phases there is avoidance of one W2 move out of the set play's triple threat (a specific cyclic form of the Sushkov theme). Moreover, the W2 moves which featured within the set play's triple threat recur, but separated, as a respective single move in the said three phases (Mäkihovi theme).

The above content is shown in a flawless and well-constructed position, with several plausible tries, which are refuted in a thematic manner: the first refutation shows the formal pattern that is described above, while the other two refutations are close to the white strategy as they interfere with the w♖'s route to c6.

The whole play is thematic, which may be an advantage (as the absence of a by-play is good from an aesthetic point of view and allows a selfmate fan to easily find and enjoy the intended pattern), but also a flaw (as a problem with such a formal content could hardly please a solver and could hardly compete in a strong tourney against problems with many variations and a well-pointed play).

This problem is distinctive from all other entries because of its "letters" content and perhaps due to its original approach of showing it with a selfmate flavour. I tried to measure the notable algebraic achievement *vis-à-vis* the modest number of variations, as well as the inherent repetition of the two W3 moves and the only mate (both occurring on c6), and – having in mind also the use of triple and double threats (which is still a rather non-standard feature in the selfmate field) – I firmly believe that awarding a special recognition to this problem is a right decision.

F11 – 1st Honorable mention



s#9

11+4

1. ♖e7! zz

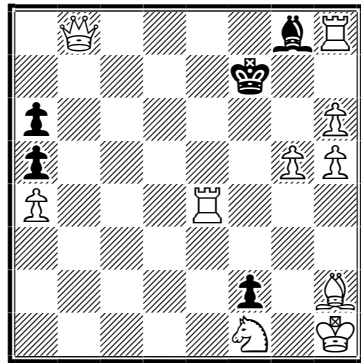
1... ♜f1 2. ♚a2+ ♛d3 3. ♞b3+ ♛c4
4. ♞b2+ ♛d3 5. ♚b1+ ♛c4 6. ♞c2+
♛d3 7. ♞d2+ ♛c4 8. ♚d3+!
9. ♞c2+ ♜:c2#

1... ♜g2 2. ♜a6+ ♛:d5 3. ♞b5+
♛c4 4. ♞b6+ ♛d5 5. ♜c4+!
6. ♚c2+ ♛d5 7. ♚f5+ ♛c4 8. ♞c6
♜:c6+ 9. ♚b5+ ♜:b5#.

In both variations a white line piece (w♚ or w♜) grants a square to the b♛ (d3 or d5) at the W2 moves and this piece becomes a rear peace of a battery that is created at the W3 move. The b♛ returns to his diagram square c4 at the B3 move, and then again to the granted square at the B4 move after firing of the newly created battery. There is no full harmony of the play because the rear battery piece is sacrificed on the earlier granted square (delayed Umnov effect) at different moves (8. ♚d3+! ♛:d3 or

5. ♜c4+! ♛:c4) and a 2nd white battery creation and firing occurs only in the first variation (6. ♞c2+ ♛d3 7. ♞d2+). Nevertheless, this is a good strategic moreover with a nice key and the position is quite light.

F3 – 2nd Honorable mention



s#7*

2 sol.

10+5

*1... ♜h7 2. ♞d8! ♜g6! (all other w♜ moves are answered quickly)
3. ♚f4+ ♜f5 4. ♚d6! zz ♜~ 5. ♞f4+
♜f5 6. ♚c7+ ♛e6 7. ♞e4+ ♜:e4#.

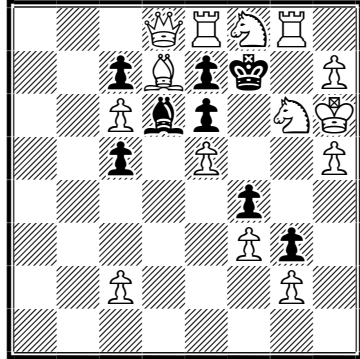
1. ♞e8! zz ♜h7 2. ♚f4+ ♜f5 3. h7! zz
♛g7 4. ♞eg8+! (♞hg8+?) ♛f7 5. ♞g6!
(~?) ♛e7 6. ♞g7+ ♛e6 7. ♚e4+ ♜:e4#.

1. ♚d6! zz ♜h7 2. ♞a8! (♞h~?) ♜g6
3. ♞f4+ ♜f5 4. ♚c7+ ♛e6 5. ♞a6+
♛d5 6. ♞a5+ ♛e6 7. ♞e4+ ♜:e4#.

Selfmate moremovers with a full-length set play are not very rare (some of them feature even in recent FIDE Albums), but the two-solutions play makes F3 a distinctive specimen. The three lines of the play involve pinning and unpinning of the black bishop with some quiet and quite unexpected white moves, but the model mate is the same and that is not advantage of this problem.

The position and keys are good and the two-solutions form is an acceptable device for showing the above content, so F3 deserves its place in the award.

F6 – 3rd Honorable mention



s#7

14+8

1. ♖c8? zz ♗:e5 2. ♜h8+ ♚f6
 3. ♞g6+ ♜f5 4. ♛d5 c4 5. ♞g4! ♜f6
 6. ♞f4+ ♗:f4+ 7. ♛g5+ ♗:g5# (5...c3
 6. ♛d3+ ♜f6 7. ♞:f4+ ♗:f4#), 1...c4!

1. ♜:e6? zz ♗:e5 2. ♞:e7+ ♚f6
 3. ♜:c5 ♗d6! 4. ♞e4+ ♜f7 5. ♛e7+
 ♗:e7 6. ♜e5+ ♜f6 7. ♞f8+ ♗:f8#
 (3...♗~ 4. ♞f7+ ♚:f7 5. ♜h8+ ♗:h8
 6. ♛e8+ ♜f6 7. ♞g7 ♗:g7#), 1...c4!

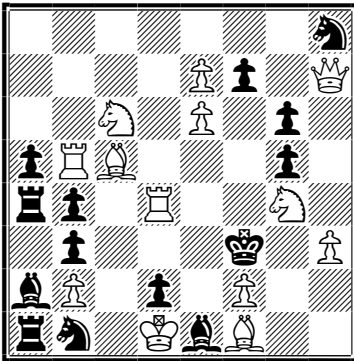
1.c4! zz ♗:e5 2. ♞:e7+ ♚f6 3. ♞:e6+
 3...♜f7 4. ♞f6+ ♗:f6 5. ♜h8+
 ♗:h8 6. ♛e8+ ♜f6 7. ♞g7 ♗:g7#
 3...♜f5 4. ♛f6+ ♗:f6 5. ♜h4+
 ♗:h4 6. ♞e7+ ♜f6 7. ♜g6 ♗:g5#.

Both tries are refuted by 1...c4!
 and White finds a cure against this
 black move simply by disallowing it.
 White forces the black bishop to
 mate the wK by arrival on 4 squares:
 - g5 in the try 1. ♖c8?
 - f8 in the try 1. ♜:e6?;
 - g7 and g5 in the solution after
 nice quiet white moves.

The economy is acceptable, but the position looks clumsy and the overall idea and its realization do not support a higher ranking of this problem.

The key is good and the switchback by the key piece to c5 is pleasing, but the position is too heavy.

F16 - Commendation



s#7

13+14

1. ♖d6! – 2. ♜f5+ g:f5 3. ♜d3+ ♜e4
 4. ♖g2+ ♜:d3 5. ♚:f5+ ♜c4 6. ♚c5+
 ♜d3 7. ♚c2+ b:c2#

1...f:e6 2. ♜f4+ g:f4 3. ♖ce5+ ♜e4
 4. ♖d3+ ♜d4 5. ♖c5+ ♜d5 6. ♖:b4+
 ♜d4 7. ♖c3+ ♖:c3#

1...♖:f2 2. ♖ce5+ ♜g3 3. ♖:g6+
 ♜f3 4. ♖6e5+ ♜g3 5. ♖c4+ ♜f3
 6. ♜d3+ ♖e3 7. ♖:d2+ ♖:d2#.

This problem has a good strategic play, which is not fully matched: sacrifice in the 1st variation (2. ♜f4+) and clearance of the line h7-e4 in the 2nd variation (3. ♖:g6+); and battery creation occurs at different white moves (the W5 move in the 1st variation; the W2 and W4 moves in the 2nd variation).

I congratulate the authors of the entries, which entered the award, and I apologize to the organizer and the authors for the three-days delay.

Zoran Gavrilovski,
 August 4, 2023